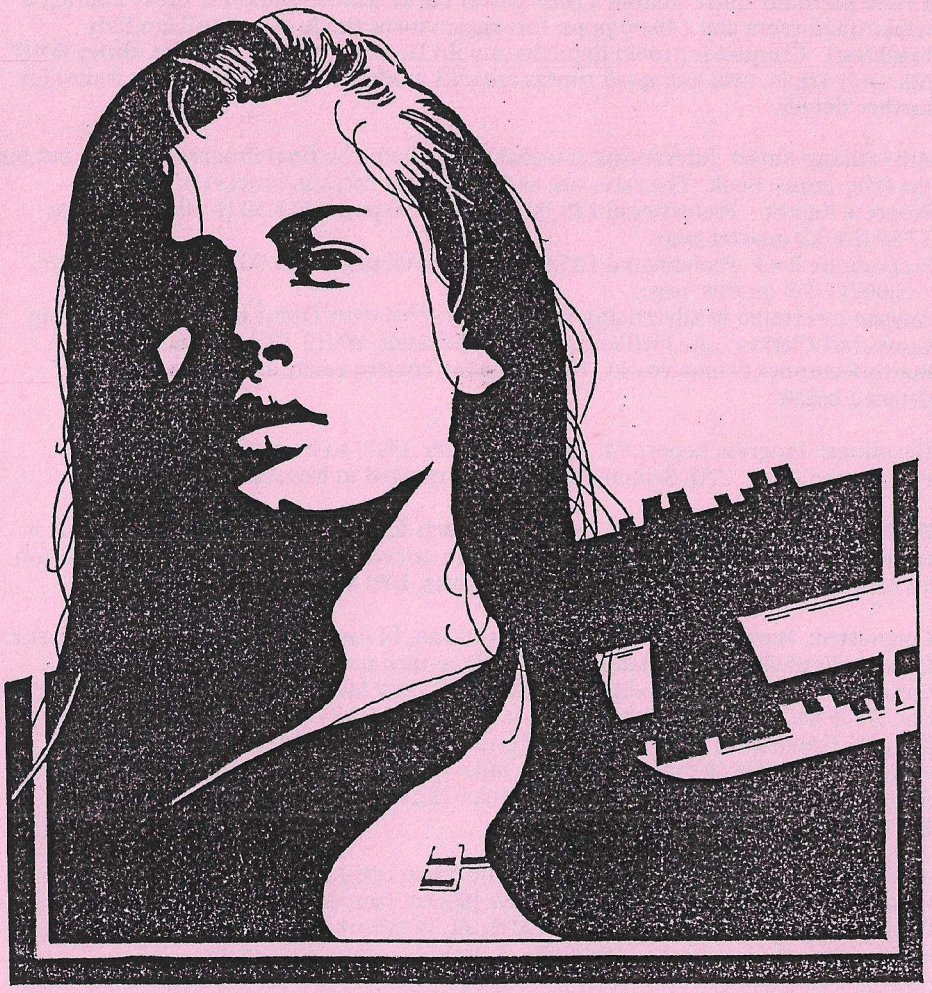
Novacon 27

Progress Report 3



Novacon 27: 14th to 16th November 1997 at the Abbey Hotel, Great Malvern, with Guest of Honour Peter F Hamilton.

Membership & Enquiries: Attending membership costs £30.00 to 30th September when the price will rise again. Supporting membership costs £10.50. Cheques should be made payable to "Novacon 27" and sent to Carol Morton at 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS. Enquires regarding memberships and/or hotel bookings should be sent to Carol at the same address or you can call her on 01384-825386 (before 9pm).

Room Rates: £32.00 per person per night for people sharing twin/double rooms, £35.00 pppn for those sharing a four poster room, £28.00 pppn for those sharing a triple/quad room and £40.00 pppn for single rooms (inclusive of full English breakfast). Cheques for room deposits should be made payable to "The Abbey Hotel". NB: Only triple, twin and quad rooms are still available in the Abbey - see below for further details.

Advertising Rates: Advertising is welcome for both the final Progress Report and for the Programme Book. The rates are as follows (fan rates in brackets):
Progress Report - Professional £23.00 (£12.50) full page, £13.50 (£7.00) half page, £7.50 (£4.00) quarter page.
Programme Book -Professional £45.00 (£22.50) full page, £25.00 (£12.50) half page, £15.00 (£7.50) quarter page.
Anyone interested in advertising should contact Martin Tudor at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, (off Clarkes Lane,) Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX, (e-mail martin@empties.demon.co.uk). Deadlines for camera-ready advertising copy are detailed below.

Deadlines: Progress Report #4: 9th September 1997, to be mailed October 1997.
Programme Book: 27th September 1997, distributed at Novacon 27.

Book Room Rates: Tables will cost £15.00 each for the whole weekend. To book a table (or tables) you must be a member of the convention and write to Carol Morton, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS.

Committee: Martin Tudor, Chair & Publications, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, (off Clarkes Lane,) Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX, e-mail martin@empties.demon.co.uk. Carol Morton, Registrations/Hotel Liaison and Tony Morton, Treasurer, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS, tel: 01384-825386 (before 9pm). Chris Murphy, Operations, (NB: change of address) 126 McKean Road, Oldbury, B69 4BA, e-mail him on CSHM@compuserv.com. Mike D Siddall, Programme, 133 Duke Street, Askam-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA16 7AE, tel: 01229-462517, e-mail mds@askamite.demon.co.uk

Acknowledgements: Dave Mooring for the cover art; Julian Headlong for his article; Carol Morton and Mike D Siddall for their pieces; Tony Berry for his fanzine list. This Progress Report was printed on the CRITICAL WAVE photocopier, contact Martin Tudor at the above address for details of WAVE's competitive prices.

Chairman's Piece by Martin Tudor

Well despite a number of personal problems (which unfortunately delayed this Progress Report for a few weeks) you'll be pleased to hear that everything is back in hand and things are going very well.

If you're interested in helping out on the day (we especially need gophers for "steward duties") please contact Chris Murphy at 126 McKean Road, Oldbury, B69 4BA (please note change of address) or e-mail him on CSHM@compuserv.com.

Our final Progress Report will be out in October - by which time Mr Siddall will have finalised the programme and *everyone* will have, of course, paid for their tickets for the Band, Beer & Sausage Evening (see below for details).

Registrations by Carol Morton

At the time of writing (10th August) the hotel was almost full - we had just two twins and a couple of triples and quads left. SO IF YOU WANT A ROOM IN THE MAIN HOTEL AND HAVE NOT YET BOOKED ONE - DO SO P.D.Q. (If you haven't completed a booking form yet you will find one in this package. It will be in your interests to get this in to me as soon as you can, brownie points will be earned by anyone 'phoning me to reserve a room but I will need your form and £20.00 per person deposit before I actually book the room, you can either send a cheque made out to "The Abbey Hotel" or fill in your credit card number and expiry date.)

Overflow accommodation is available. If you have yet to book a room a list of the local hotels and guest houses I have contacted is enclosed with this Progress Report.

However, if you require overflow accommodation it is up to you to make your own booking from the list provided. (Although I will help out if you find yourself stuck, so feel free to contact me in an emergency.)

I'll see you in November.

[Enquires regarding memberships and/or hotel bookings should be sent to Carol Morton at 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS, or you can call her on 01384-825386 (before 9pm).]

Programme by Mike D Siddall

Okay, anyone remember Schrodinger's Cat ? Oh, come on, you *must* do; cat in box, is it alive, is it dead, answer...it's both, quantum physics, all that sort of stuff. Well, the programme's like that, will it be good, will it be bad ? You'll have to open the box and see won't you ? Except in this case you don't get the option of taking the money instead. There you go, programming as an example of quantum indeterminacy, who says SF fans never talk about science ?

Enough whimsy I hear you say, anything new to report ? Oh yes, yes indeedy, you betcha (I know this is a bit over the top, but it's difficult to get special effects like a drum roll and a brass section into a text medium). Novacon 27 will have a NEW

version of Brian Aldiss' SF BLUES, in collaboration with the SF Theatre of Liverpool, which will be on the Saturday night, and will be wonderful. You will attend, and you will enjoy it more than you can imagine, but then, that's Novacons for you.

Otherwise, Novacon will have all the usual things, and, hopefully some unusual. You'll just have to open the box and see, won't you ?

[We're always looking for good ideas, and Mike is certainly willing to listen to anything. Write him, call him, e-mail him - he gets lonely - at 133 Duke Street, Askam-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA16 7AE, tel: 01229-462517, e-mail mds@askamite.demon.co.uk.]

Beer, Sausages AND an Oompah Band!

Sunday night at Novacon has never been like THIS before. Well, okay, a few years back at the Royal Anguish we did have a Beer and Sausage evening, but THAT wasn't like THIS - back then the noisiest thing was probably the bangers!

Yes, roll up, roll up! For a mere £2.50 per person you get to stuff yourself on sausages and "mustard accompaniments" whilst listening to the dulcet tones {ahem} of our three-piece "Oompah Band". (Sorry, the beer you have to buy yourself - although the hotel is laying on Stella Artois (for that Continental flavour).

Please complete the form that arrived with this Progress Report and return it (with your cheque for £2.50 per head) to Carol Morton, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS **by the 1st October!** (Please note this event will be held on Sunday evening starting, at the earliest, around 7pm-7.30pm and running for a couple of hours.)

The Mandel-Brat Set by Julian Headlong

...on a whisper of wind the nightblack Westland ghostwing carried the taut figure of Greg Mandel across the sky above Rutland Water.

Looking down, the green phoshene glow of his headup display painted bright streaks across his dropzone. The time display in the bottom corner of his photon amp image read 17:21:08. Greg twisted the arming switch on his Event Horizon targeting computer.

Seconds later a cloud of lethal antigen-specific toxin-coated titanium nanoparticles began to rain from the evening sky over the enemy below. He keyed the amp to infra red and upped the magnification. Within minutes the last target was dead, he could see them lying in windrows of twisted shapes across the fields, and already the toxin would be biodegrading into harmless catabolites, making the field safe for the next phase of this tricky operation.

He keyed the com unit with an English Telecom code.

'Thunderchild', he announced.

'How did it go?', a female voice asked.

'All sorted, no messing', he replied curtly.

The female voice went on hesitantly,

'If the rabbits are all dead, can we start planting the rest of the lemon trees this evening?'

'Time for a pint I reckon', said Greg...

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Actually, Greg Mandel is not a nice man.

Not someone you would want to meet in a dark alleyway, or even a well lit mall, for that matter. He is a stone cold killer. A street fighter, a terrorist and all round thug. A trainer of children in the fine arts of murder and revolution. An assassin of sheep farmers in Kettering.

He is a hard-nosed private eye, a bio-engineered psychic, trained as a human lie detector, a military 'badcop' interrogator, an 'eidolonic' mental rapist, an empath who uses his powers for serial seductions. Not a nice man atall.

He is also a constant friend, a faithful husband, and a good father. Someone on whose shoulder a little girl, or an injured comrade, can cry. Someone who can rescue a maiden from a fate-worse-than-whatever, turn down a liaison with the richest girl in the world, turn down a whole slew of non-executive directorships in various greedy mega-corps.

And turn down a free BMW.

A man of honour.

And a pretty damn good lemon farmer.

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Julia Evans is not a nice girl.

She is the richest girl in the world. Heiress to the largest company in the world. Owner of vital energy monopolies, space colonies, and governments. She is the richest and bitchiest of rich bitches ever.

She is manipulative: she arranges for her best 'friend' to be seduced and kidnapped into sexual slavery by her most hated enemy, just to clear a path to her 'friends' lovers bed. She is amoral: she arranges the ruination of a gossip columnist who criticises her fashion sense. She is a murderer: she arranges to 'nuke' Wisbech just to get rid of a business rival.

She is also an abused child, a friendless nerd, an escapee from a sick Koresh-style religious commune, who hears 'voices' inside her head - including her grandfather's ghost.

She is also a generous friend, a faithful wife, and a good mother. Someone who attends her daughter's school prize giving (a local state school at that). Someone who rescues a medical disaster case, a blind quadra-amputee, criminal terrorist and computer hacker - and marries him! (after spending millions on medical research to fix him up). Someone who supports invention, space exploration, and voyages of discovery. Who has computer interface implants in her head (the voices), and her dead grandfather's personality in a convenient computer core (the ghost), and turns out to be the best all round financial genius ever.

A woman of substance.

And a pretty damn good computer hacker.

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The most important thing about these people is that we care about them. We care about their problems, their struggles, their triumphs. They're also pretty cool.

And so is their world, in a metaphorical sense, that is. In reality it's not cool atall, in fact it's actually rather warm. Hot even. Runaway greenhouses careering around the world have led to global warming on a grand scale, citrus farms in surprising locations, sticky people, sticky roads, and sticky weather - England has a regular hurricane season. And the Warming has also led to the inundation of many important cities, towns, and villages, and Wisbech. And now the most important city in the world, the centre of finance, industry, shipping, and super-hi-tech research for Planet Earth, (with property values higher than downtown Tokyo)... is... is... Peterborough. Mind you, the spaceport is at Duxford.

The tech is cool too. Really hot stuff. Sanger spaceplanes, cyborg panthers, gigawatt room temperature superconductors, artificial hormones for psychic time-travel, biotech, nanotech, and orbital cities (including the Crown Colony of New London - a sixteen kilometre long asteroid moved into near earth orbit). And gene engineered mer-people living in Rutland Water. And lemon farms.

So, we have interesting people, living in an interesting world, with interesting toys to play with. So what do they actually do. Very well, actually. Each of the books tells a story of murder mystery, space adventure, military action, technological discovery, political chicanery, boardroom skulduggery, sundry romantic entanglements, and lemon farming.

Every popular form of fiction is represented except the kitchen sink drama, (OK, he also left out the western, space opera and horror novel...so you need to read "The Reality Dysfunction" - where the scenes of Starship Troopers versus the Demon Hordes of Hell in an Old West Township are amongst the finest examples of this little known genre ever written). Actually, the stories do include the kitchen sink. The characters do so many things, have so many problems, and so many choices to make, they do occasionally sit around in kitchens and moan about life. But then they get up, go out, get in their hypersonic, vtol, orbit capable spaceplane, and damned well do something about it.

Pity about what happened to New Labour though...

The Nova Awards by Tony Berry

Created in 1973 by the late Gillon Field, the Nova Awards are presented annually for work in fanzines. Until 1981 only one award was presented, to "Best Fanzine" and decided by a committee of well-known fans. In 1977 voting was extended to all "Active Fans" who were members of Novacon, and then in 1981 two further awards were added: "Best Fanwriter" and "Best Fanartist".

For a fanzine to qualify for the 1997 award, one or more issues must have been published between 1st October 1996 and 30th September 1997. For a writer or artist to qualify, they must have had at least one piece of work published for the first time between those dates.

A "Fanzine" is defined as an amateur publication which is concerned with sf, fantasy, sf and fantasy fans and related subjects, copies of which may be obtained in exchange for other fanzines or in response to letters of comment. An "Active Fan" is defined as someone who has received six or more different fanzines during the year

(different publications, not different issues of the same publication. The various official organs of a group, society or convention do not count as different fanzines).

Voting is open to full or supporting members of Novacon 27 who meet the requirements above, and can be made by post (ballots will go out with the fourth progress report) and at the convention itself.

Qualifying fanzines received since Progress Report #2 are:

ADVENTURES IN FAILURE #1, #2. Kevin McVeigh, 37 Firs Road, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, LA7 7QF.
ALTITUDE #1-3. Pat McMurray, 28 Plaistow Grove, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3PB
ANSIBLE #117-121. Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU.
ATTITUDE #11. Michael Abbott, John Dallman & Pam Wells, 102 William Smith Close, Cambridge, CB1 3QF,
BABES WITH ATTITUDE #1 & #2. Marianne Cain, 42 Tower Hamlets Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 4RH.
BALLOONS OVER BRISTOL #11. Pete 'n' Sue Binfield, 160 Wells Road, Bristol, BS4 2AG.
BANANA WINGS #6. Claire Brialey, 26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7HA and Mark Plummer, 14 Northway Road, Croydon, CR0 6JE.
BOB#12. Ian Sorensen, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton, ML3 7HY.
BW #1-2. Claire Brialey, 26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7HA and Mark Plummer, 14 Northway Road, Croydon, CR0 6JE.
DREAMBERRY WINE March, May, July, 1997. Mike Don, 233 Maine Road, Manchester, M14 7WG.
FANWATCHING. Steve Davies, 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, Berks., RG30 2RP and Alison Scott, 42 Tower Hamlets Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 4RH.
BAD HABITS, FILTHY HABITS and HABITS ALPHA. Felix Cohen, Hillcroft, Saltway, Astwood Bank, Redditch, Worcs., B96 6JU.
IMMACULATE INFECTION. Mike D Siddall, 133 Duke Street, Askam-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA16 7AE.
THE INTERESTING TIMES. Rhodri James, 135 Alex Wood Road, Cambridge, CB4 2EJ.
NEVER QUITE ARRIVING #5. Christina Lake, 12 Hatherley Road, Bishopton, Bristol, BS7 8QA.
OBSESSIONS #4.5. Bridget Hardcastle & Simon Bradshaw, 13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London, NW3 6PX.
PLOKTA Vol 2 No's 1, 2, 3. Steve Davies, 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, Berks., RG30 2RP and Alison Scott, 42 Tower Hamlets Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 4RH.
THE QUARRY #5. Jen Albinson, 1 Bridge Street, Silverdale, Staffs., ST5 6NQ.
RAILINGS #1. Steve Green, 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7LQ.
SHOOTING STARS: THE FANZINE #1. Dave Hicks, 1 St. Woolos Place, Newport, South Wales, NP9 4GQ and Mike D Siddall, 133 Duke Street, Askam-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA16 7AE.
SITTING IN THE REPRO ROOM. Rhodri James, 135 Alex Wood Road, Cambridge, CB4 2EJ.
YEAR OF THE COW. Judith Hanna, 15 Jansons Road, London, N15 4JU.

All of the above are available for "The Usual" - which generally means available for trade, contribution or if you send a large stamped address envelope to the editor in question you will doubtless receive a response.

If you know of any fanzines not listed above which you believe to be eligible please contact me at my address below. Equally if you have any enquiries about the Novas or you want a copy of the Rules (50p to cover copying and postage), contact me, Tony Berry, at 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 4EP.

Novacon 27 Members as of 3rd August

133 Nigel Furlong
134 Sabine Furlong
135 Tina Rath
136 Tony Rath
137 Michael Jones
138 Christine Jones
139 J O'Dell
140s E M Costelloe
141 Madeleine Tyrrell
142 Nick Tyrrell
143 Dave Lally
144 Wendy Moylan
145 Ashley Walker
146 Susan Dye
147 John Rowbottom
148 Jack Cohen
149 Tim Morley
150 Sue Mason
151 Mark Simmons
152 Stuart Capewell
153 Mike Ford
154 David Laight
155 Pat McMurray
156 Krystyna Oborn
157 Antony J Shepherd
158 Mike Stone
159 Michael 'Simo' Simpson
160 Lilian Edwards
161 T C Valois
162 Cathryn Easthope
163 Rhodri James
164 Paul Treadway
165 D M Sherwood
166 David Merry
167 John Merry
168 David Cochrane
169 Chris Baker
170 Rachel Baker
171 Lesley Ward
172 Brian Davies
173 Austin Benson
174 Caroline Wilson
175 Dan Smithers
176 Lucy Smithers
177 Felix Cohen
178 Gordon W Brignal
179 Amanda C Baker
180 Robert Sneddon
181 Laura Wheatley
182 Andy Richards
183 Nick Mills
184 Jo Mills
185 Susan Peak
186 David Peak
187 Paul Blair
188 Judy Miller
189 Elaine Coates
190 Mark Slater
191 Mike Figg
192 Janet Figg
193 Susan Francis
194 Linda-Claire Toal
195 Rob Jones
196 Mary Branscombe
197 Simon Bisson
198 Dave Hicks
199 Cat Coast
200 Michael Abbott
201 Anne Wilson
202 John F Dowd
203 Frances Dowd
204 Carol Murtha Irving
205 Roger Burton West
206 Caroline Watsham
207 John Bilton
208 Moira Shearman
209 Freda Warrington
210 Mike Llewellyn
211 Dave French
212 Shirley French
213 Kate Solomon
214 Malcolm Davies
215 Alison McCann
216 Ken MacLeod
217 Miriam Moss
218 Yvonne Rowse
219 Susie Haynes
220 David Wilgress
221 John L Waggott
222 Simon Bradshaw
223 Ian Brooks
224 Barbara Brooks
225 Lee Russ
226 Paul Lewis
227 Steve Lockley
228 Jane Del-Pizzo
229 Mike O'Driscoll
230 Mike Evans
231 Alison Cooke
232 Phil Wain
233 John Meaney
234 Yvonne Meaney
235 Chris Hill
236 Penny Hill
237 Lizanne Norman
238 David G Thomas
239 Billy Stirling
240 Julia Daly
241 Ceri Pritchard